

**JOINT RESOLUTION ADDRESSING CURRENT
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT PLANS**

2009 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: John G. Mathis

Senate Sponsor: _____

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This joint resolution of the Legislature expresses support for the current Bureau of Land Management resource management plans and the process used to complete the plans.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ expresses strong support of the Federal Bureau of Land Management's resource management plans developed for Moab, Richfield, Price, Vernal, Monticello, and Kanab, Utah, and the lengthy, thoughtful, and public process used to develop the plans; and
- ▶ opposes current actions taken that contest and delay the resource management plans and the sale of 77 oil and gas leases on land in Utah.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

WHEREAS, because the nation's dependence on foreign sources of energy leaves the economy vulnerable, serious effort must be devoted to decrease the nation's dependency on foreign energy sources;



28 WHEREAS, oil and natural gas form an essential bridge to attaining a future of energy
29 independence sustained by alternative and renewable energy sources;

30 WHEREAS, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (Act) mandates that the
31 Federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manage public lands for multiple uses such as
32 outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, energy exploration and production, conservation, and
33 timber production;

34 WHEREAS, the Act establishes that the BLM sustain the health, diversity, and
35 productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations;

36 WHEREAS, in making decisions about land use, the Act requires the BLM to develop
37 resource management plans and update them when circumstances change and significant new
38 information becomes available, and these important land use decision documents require public
39 input and participation;

40 WHEREAS, managing the nation's cherished public lands for multiple uses is a
41 constant challenge;

42 WHEREAS, citizens expect the BLM to provide responsible energy and minerals
43 development, recreational opportunities, appropriate access, and healthy landscapes, while still
44 providing an adequate level of resource protection to ensure that future generations will
45 continue to benefit from and enjoy these areas;

46 WHEREAS, the resource management plan process, developed by the BLM to
47 accomplish these goals, is thorough, deliberative, and very public;

48 WHEREAS, resource management plans provide administrative protection to certain
49 lands, few of which are available for leasing, and carry major constraints such as no surface
50 occupancy and no surface disturbance stipulations;

51 WHEREAS, extensive state and community input is invited and submitted both in
52 writing and through the public hearing process;

53 WHEREAS, resource management plans for Moab, Richfield, Price, Vernal,
54 Monticello, and Kanab recently went into effect after nearly eight years of development and
55 review;

56 WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of public comments were considered during the
57 planning process;

58 WHEREAS, new environmental restrictions included in the resource management plans

59 provide multiple layers of safeguards to prevent environmental damage to sensitive natural
60 resources;

61 WHEREAS, the proposed plans envision maintaining areas open to oil and gas leasing,
62 but also institute protective measures during development like timing limitations best
63 management practices, and advanced technology to minimize the footprint of developing those
64 important resources;

65 WHEREAS, there was no cutting of corners or abridgement of processes in preparing
66 the resource management plans;

67 WHEREAS, due to the strong feelings regarding the use of public lands, every private
68 group and government entity involved in the process would like to see some changes in the
69 outcome, but all groups were heard and their concerns given thoughtful and careful
70 consideration;

71 WHEREAS, the state of Utah and Carbon County were cooperating agencies in the
72 BLM's development of the current resource management plans, and both have interests in
73 preserving the plans;

74 WHEREAS, upon approval of these management plans, the BLM offered for lease
75 parcels of land which had been set aside for several years pending completion of the resource
76 management plans;

77 WHEREAS, leases do not convey an unlimited right to explore or an unlimited right to
78 develop oil and gas resources, but are subject to terms designed to minimize the impacts of
79 development;

80 WHEREAS, in addition to proposing an accommodation for the nation's pressing need
81 for energy development, the plans also propose protecting public lands within the six planning
82 areas where there are sensitive natural resources, making these lands off limits to surface
83 disturbing activities and unavailable to oil and gas leasing;

84 WHEREAS, this type of protection would extend to almost one million acres of public
85 land in addition to nearly two million acres of existing wilderness study areas;

86 WHEREAS, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and other parties have filed suit
87 challenging the legality of the BLM's December 19, 2008, sale of 77 oil and gas leases;

88 WHEREAS, on February 4, 2008, United States Department of the Interior Secretary
89 Ken Salazar cancelled 77 oil and gas leases on parcels of land in Utah; and

90 WHEREAS, the lawsuit and the oil and gas lease cancellations strike at the heart of a
91 careful, deliberative, and lengthy public process to develop resource management plans that
92 would benefit Utahns and the citizens of the United States:

93 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah
94 expresses its strong support of the Federal Bureau of Land Management's resource
95 management plans developed for Moab, Richfield, Price, Vernal, Monticello, and Kanab, Utah,
96 and most particularly the lengthy, thoughtful, and public process used to develop the plans.

97 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature opposes current actions taken that
98 contest and delay the resource management plans and the sale of the 77 oil and gas leases.

99 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the United
100 States Department of the Interior, Governor Huntsman, the Federal Bureau of Land
101 Management and its Utah office, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, the Carbon County
102 Commission, the Kane County Commission, the Sevier County Commission, the San Juan
103 County Commission, the Uintah County Commission, the Grand County Commission, the city
104 councils of Moab, Richfield, Price, Vernal, Monticello, and Kanab, the Utah Public Lands
105 Policy Coordination Office, the Utah Association of Counties, and to the members of Utah's
106 congressional delegation.

Legislative Review Note
as of 2-10-09 5:22 PM

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel

Fiscal Note

H.J.R. 19 - Joint Resolution Addressing Current Bureau of Land Management Resource Management Plans

2009 General Session

State of Utah

State Impact

Enactment of this bill will not require additional appropriations.

Individual, Business and/or Local Impact

Enactment of this bill likely will not result in direct, measurable costs and/or benefits for individuals, businesses, or local governments.
